

# NEXUS AFRICA

The Bulletin of the U.S. Information Service

Vol.2, N<sup>o</sup>.3

August 1996

## WITH WET WINGS, AFRICA EMERGES FROM COCOON OF ECONOMIC WOE

*Major international organizations like the United Nations are seeing embryonic signs of hope following a long period of "Afro-pessimism" about the world's most impoverished and conflict-ridden continent. Africa has a rate of return on foreign investment 25 percent higher than any other part of the world, according to the United States Commerce Department.*

By Judith Matloff

From *The Christian Science Monitor*

For years, Africa has been synonymous with catastrophe, famine, and war. Now it is beginning to gain a new image.

Major international organizations like the United Nations are seeing embryonic signs of hope following a long period of "Afro-pessimism" about the world's most impoverished and conflict-ridden continent.

Democratic and free-market reforms after decades of heavy state control in some of the richer African countries are producing muted optimism for the sub-Saharan region of 600 million people.

"I've made a tour of certain countries in Africa," Renato Ruggiero, director general of the Geneva-based World Trade Organization, told the Monitor recently: "It's a continent where we can see some success stories developing."

Africa has a rate of return on foreign investment 25 percent higher than any other part of the world, according to the United States Commerce Department.

In the past few years, annual growth rates in three countries have exceeded 8 percent. Eight countries have achieved between 6 and 8 percent growth. A dozen countries have averaged between 3 and 6 percent. In addition, 35 countries have begun economic reform measures to support private-sector development.

Some of the biggest success stories have been in southern or West Africa notably South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast.

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# AFRICA EMERGES FROM ECONOMIC WOE

But success is relative on a continent that claims 33 of the world's 47 least-developed countries. Four major civil wars have ended, but a half-dozen continue. Coups and ethnic strife abound. Several countries cannot feed themselves without foreign aid. The foreign debt of sub-Saharan Africa totals hundreds of billions of dollars.

In some African nations, economic growth is higher than most industrialized countries. But often that growth starts from a low base, and population increases far outstrip economic growth.

Abdelharim Dirar, who heads the economic section of the Addis Ababa-based Organization of Africa Unity (OAU), notes that solid economic growth in Ethiopia for the third consecutive year was not as impressive as it sounded.

"You started at an average (per capita) yearly income of \$94 a year. Even if Ethiopia grew for 40 years at 6 percent, the average income of Ethiopians would still be very low," he said.

After being ignored for years after the end of the cold war, Africa is beginning to garner more international attention.

United Nations Security Council President and US Ambassador Madeleine Albright has paid several visits to Africa. And the late Ron Brown was the first American Commerce Secretary to make a tour of African countries in 15 years.

Many talks at the meeting of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), now under way in South Africa, are focusing on how to save Africa from being sidelined in the globalization and liberalization sweeping world trade.

However, by far the biggest signal of confidence in Africa's future was the March 15 launch of a 10-year, \$25 billion UN special initiative on Africa.

The initiative — the organization's

largest-ever coordinated development action — seeks to mobilize support by all UN agencies to promote education, health care, peace, better governance, and water and food security.

"The chances of Africa emerging from its development crisis are better now than in many years," said UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the launch, which was attended by senior OAU and World Bank officials. "Now it is time for us to have a new partnership .... no stone will be (left) unturned to ensure the actions taken today will translate into concrete actions."

Whether concrete actions will ensue is the big question, critics say.

International organizations increasingly say African governments should find their own solutions for economic growth, rather than be dictated to. One answer is to promote regional trade organizations, but these are largely ineffectual from Cape Town to Cairo. And senior economists in the UN say that debt relief is critical to helping African countries alleviate poverty.


Africa is awash with economic

woes holding back development — commodity-based economies, lack of trade advantages, bloated state sectors, foreign-exchange controls that discourage investment, a low manufacturing base, uncompetitive industry markets, capital flights, corruption, and mismanagement.

Economic indicators like inflation and interest rates or taxes and stock markets are often irrelevant in countries where the average citizen trades goats for grains and rarely handles money.

South Africa is touted as one of the great success stories, with a growth rate that has increased in recent years from 0 to 3.5 percent. But trade liberalization alone was not responsible for its achievements.

President Nelson Mandela warned as he opened the UNCTAD conference that greater market access and free or fair trade hold scant promises for countries producing few goods and services with which to trade and with no market power to pursue their interests.

"The danger is that, left to its own devices, the current (world trade) regime can only entrench this inequality and widen the gap between rich and poor nations," he said. 

## THE PEOPLE

Although more than 1 billion people still live in poverty, countries in the developing world have achieved substantial gains in living standards over the past twenty years. These gains are reflected in improvement in life expectancy and primary school enrollment rates and in declines in infant mortality and illiteracy. Progress, however, had been uneven among the the regions of the developing world, among countries within those regions, and among localities within those countries. Nearly half of the world's poor live in South Asia, a region that accounts for roughly 22 percent of the world's population. Sub-Saharan Africa account for a smaller, but still a highly disproportionate, share of global poverty. National and regional averages, often bad enough in themselves, mask appallingly low life expectancy and educational attainment among the poorest members of society. This is because the weight of poverty falls most heavily on certain groups. Women in general are disadvantaged. In poor households they often shoulder more of the workload than men, are less educated, and have less access to remunerative activities. Children, too, suffer disproportionately, and the future quality of their lives is compromised by inadequate nutrition, health care, and education. This is especially true for girls, whose primary enrollment rates are less than 60 percent in many African countries. The essential task of development is to provide opportunities so that these people, and the hundreds of millions not much better off, can reach their potentials.

(From The World Bank Atlas, 1996.)

# FRONT-LINE INFLATION FIGHTERS

*Inflation is enemy number one of developing economies. Ghana's banks have joined the battle to bring down and control inflation. The road ahead is not easy. But the country's economic indicators show that they are on the right track.*

T o n y   H a w k i n s

From *The Financial Times*

**I**n Ghana's high inflation economy, the banks are in the front line in the battle to bring down the inflation rate and stabilize the cedi.

During the reform period, the government managed to slow inflation from 123 per cent in 1983 to 10 per cent by 1991, but much of this hard-won ground has been given up over the past five years and, by the end of 1995, inflation was back to 71 per cent.

The money supply target was over-shot in every one of the past six years, invariably by a huge margin, while only once during that period — in 1991 — did government meet, or better, its inflation target. With evidence to show that high inflation rates have undermined economic growth in Ghana and with recent IMF research in Ghana concluding that rapid monetary growth translates into increased inflation with a six-month time-lag before the full effect is felt, the government is relying on monetary restraint to rein in the price increases during 1996.

Accordingly, in terms of the plan agreed with the IMF, the authorities will try to bring down the rate of monetary growth from 37.5 per cent at the end of 1995 to 5 per cent by the end of this year.

That is going to be a tall order and, bankers believe, one that is unlikely to be realized, though the performance in the first half of the year seems likely to be close to the targeted 20 per cent. But getting from there to 5 per cent

looks unduly optimistic given the nature of the Ghanaian financial system.

In Ghana's cash-driven economy, currency in circulation is the largest single component of the money supply accounting for 36 per cent of broad money (M2) followed by demand deposits which contribute just under a third. Monetary growth is highly seasonal, accelerating in the final quarter of the year with cash payments to cocoa farmers.

This year's forecast 25 per cent to 30 per cent increase in the cocoa crop and the higher cedi price received by growers, partly reflecting currency depreciation, will fuel strong currency expansion towards the end of 1996 when the authorities hope to bring monetary growth down to 5 per cent.

In the final quarter of 1995, currency in circulation grew 48 per cent from its 1994 levels and if this is repeated this year, the monetary target will be missed by a wide margin.

In the first quarter, money supply grew almost 40 per cent from March 1995 levels and donors welcomed the subsequent upward pressure on interest rates in the money market which nudged up to 43 per cent in mid-June. Further increases are likely as the authorities seek to mop up excess liquidity in the market and restrain monetary growth.

It is an unusual — if not bizarre — situation in which commercial banks lend at a discount below both bank rate (45 per cent) and the treasury bill market rate. The result is that some of the banks are engaging in more money market treasury operations, taking deposits from customers and recycling them into treasury bills, rather than lending to customers.

Prime lending rates are below 40 per cent, which as one banker says, means that every time he makes a loan he is taking a loss on the transaction. In reality, of course, the banks make up their difference from fee and trading income, especially in the foreign exchange market.

This raises all sorts of doubts about the efficacy of monetary policy as a tool for fine-tuning the Ghanaian economy. If banks lend below the market rate because they must meet the needs of important customers and secure access to foreign exchange, and if currency in circulation is the driving force in monetary expansion, then interest rate policy may well turn out to be a limp-wristed business.

On the other hand, because the market is dominated by the state-owned banks — with small lending portfolios relative to their deposit base and investment ratios — interest rate policy does influence the behavior of the larger institutions.

According to the most recent survey of Ghana's banks, carried out by Price Waterhouse Associates, the country's largest bank, ranked by assets, the state-controlled Ghana Commercial Bank, had a loan-to-deposits ratio of only 11 per cent, compared with 25 per cent for Barclays Bank Ghana and 24 per cent for Standard Chartered Bank, ranked third and fourth respectively in the banking league table.

In terms of deposits the two state-owned banks have more than 40 per cent of the market (measured by the operations of the 12 leading banks), with Ghana Commercial Bank (GCB) holding a 29 per cent market share and Social Security Bank 13 per cent. Barclays, with almost 14 per cent and

Standard Chartered with 13 per cent, are the other two leading institutions, giving four banks approximately 70 per cent of the deposit market.

With spreads — between deposit and lending rates — of 20 per cent and more, banking is a highly profitable business, especially where cautious lending policies are adopted. Here, the state-owned banks are at a disadvantage, partly because of a huge branch structure and high labor costs (in the case of Ghana Commercial Bank), but also because they have borne the brunt of “political” lending to state enterprise and other poor credit risks. In 1994, GCB's staff costs were two thirds of its operating expenses compared with less than 60 per cent for Barclays and 56 per cent for Standard Chartered. Standard Chartered, which is driving banking “rightsizing” across Africa, has since

cut its staff substantially and others are following suit.

When it comes to provisions, the state banks, GCB and SSB, had 1994 loan loss provisions of 43 per cent and 36 per cent of their loan portfolios respectively against 13.5 per cent for Standard Chartered and 6 per cent for Barclays. This explains why financial sector restructuring plays so important a role in the country's reform program. The process started with the progressive liberalization of the financial sector during the 1988-1991 period during which interest rates were liberalized, credit allocation targets abolished and fees decontrolled.

In 1989, more than 30bn cedis in bad loans was removed from bank balance sheets — most of it converted into bonds and the balance handed over to the Nonperforming Assets Recovery Trust (Npart) for recovery.

Phase two of restructuring includes the sales of shares in state banks — 42 per cent of GCB has been sold and 30 per cent of SSB — though the plan of selling a further 30 per cent in each case to a strategic (presumably foreign) bank to take over management is yet to be implemented. Another four banks are on the divestiture list.

Foreign banks are certainly interested in entering this profitable market — in recent years both Stanbic of South Africa and the Hong Kong Shanghai banking group have arrived though the attraction is diluted somewhat by the depreciating cedi.

Whether a foreign bank would want to take on a retail-type operation without full management control is another matter, and if Accra really wants foreign banks to take a stake in operations such as GCB, it may have to rethink its strategy. □

## AFRICA IS 'WORLD'S FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGE'

**WASHINGTON** — “While the world has made headway in combating hunger,” Africa remains “the world's food security challenge.”

Eugene Moos, undersecretary for farm and foreign agricultural services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, stressed that point in a recent testimony before the U.S. Senate's African Affairs Subcommittee, which convened to examine food security in Africa.

“More than any region in the world, Africa's food security is now in crisis,” Moos told the subcommittee.

“Food aid,” Moos emphasized, “cannot ensure food security. At best, food aid can buy time and be combined with other actions, including internal policy support to encourage investment and influence the institutional and market environment.”

U.S. policy to bolster Africa's food security, Moos said, is twofold:

- to provide short-term food aid to help African countries meet their most immediate needs; and
- to give longer-term developmental assistance to help African countries remedy inadequacies in their infrastructure, technology, and expertise.

“For the United States,” Moos explained, “improving global food security is an essential key

to world peace and the national security of our country.”

To accomplish this goal, he noted, the United States must continue to:

- share its expertise with food deficit countries;
- enhance U.S. government support for agricultural research;
- use agricultural programs to enhance food security;
- employ an integrated approach to sustainable development “with a strong emphasis on those countries that show a good faith willingness to adopt policy reforms”;
- work with countries to achieve freer trade and a more equitable distribution of its benefits; and
- work within the multilateral system to enhance the world's food security.

While the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and a host of non-governmental organizations are helping African countries work towards an acceptable level of food security, Moos acknowledged that “the magnitude of the problem remains enormous.

“More than 40 African nations fall into the category of low-income food deficit countries,” he warned, pointing to U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) projections indicating that the number of chronically undernourished people in Africa could “increase greatly” by the year 2010.



# ERITREA SAYS NO THANK YOU TO FOREIGN AID THAT HAS STRINGS

*Eritrea has emerged from 30 years of war with neighboring Ethiopia determined to rebuild with no dictates from Western donors. It is an ambitious experiment on the world's most impoverished continent. Some say it is a model that gives hope for ways to end the cycle of dependency in many African countries.*

By Judith Matloff

From *The Christian Science Monitor*

**I**n a scorchingly hot day, a group of youths chisel a boulder to repair a warblasted road, filling potholes with the chips of rock by hand. Several miles away, pensioners supervise the laying of rusted rails to rebuild an abandoned railroad, receiving only food as payment.

It is not only rocks that these Eritreans are breaking: They are also shattering the mold of how African nations develop.

Eritrea has emerged from 30 years of war with neighboring Ethiopia determined to rebuild with no dictates from Western donors. It is an ambitious experiment on the world's most impoverished continent. Some say it is a model that gives hope for ways to end the cycle of dependency in many African countries.

"These guys are challenging the modalities of aid. They are forcing us to ask pertinent questions," says the chief representative of the United Nations agencies in Eritrea, Martyn Ngwenya.

The tiny country of 3 million resounds with the din of construction — hammering, drilling, sawing — much of it by volunteers or demobilized soldiers. Eritrea's vision is to harness armies of the unemployed to build low-income housing and highways, lay telephone cables, and plant trees.

The sacrifices extend to all, a rare sign on a continent rife with corruption, handouts, and thievery. Several ministers have not received salaries since the 1993 referendum, which resoundingly brought the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) government to power two years after winning a war of independence from Ethiopia.

Many government officials bicycle to work, their shirts frayed and shoes worn. Unlike most African capitals, virtually no beggars or rubbish are seen in the spotless streets of the capital, Asmara.

Eritreans explain tills phenomenon by the fact that, spurned by the Soviet bloc, the West, and Arab states while fighting for freedom, the rebel Eritrean People's Liberation Front (as the PFDJ was then known) had to be self-sufficient to survive.

In the process, it became one of the most disciplined and cohesive rebel forces in modern history. The 100,000-strong army raised its own funds and built its own factories that manufactured everything from plastic sandals to weaponry. This self-reliance and a certain suspicion of the outside world continue in peacetime.

"International financial agencies are too obsessed with conventional ways of looking at things," says Finance Minister Haile Woldense in an interview. "We have developed our own vision that is peculiar to the history of our struggle."

This vision translates into an equal partnership with donors. It also means an emphasis on lifting up the poor while courting private and foreign

investment.

For instance, Eritrea turned down several construction projects offered by foreign-aid groups, deciding it was cheaper to hire its own people. It declined \$75 million in European aid to build a road because the government felt the project would have benefited only the rich. Officials from the UN World Food Program were lucked out last year for what was seen as acting out of line.

There is much work ahead. The country has virtually no physical or institutional infrastructure. Decent roads, telecommunications, a trained civil service, and a private business sector are lacking. Work must be found for 60,000 demobilized soldiers and 500,000 refugees from Sudan.

While Eritrea is still very poor, some say it has the potential to develop economically like an Asian tiger. "I have been working in the region for 35 years and have never seen such a unique situation. These people have a remarkable long-range vision and dedication," says US Ambassador to Eritrea Robert Houdek.

Why does Eritrea's approach seem to work? The government is extremely popular and has easily mobilized people after winning the independence they fought so hard for. Unlike many other African countries, corruption is frowned upon. And unlike next-door Sudan, wracked by civil war, Christians and Muslims coexist peacefully.

Ministers admit the luxury of a new nation is to start from scratch. "We learned from others' mistakes," says Mr. Woldense. "We could design things as we wanted."

# THE WORDLY BUSINESS OF BRIBES: QUIET BATTLE IS JOINED

*Corruption undermines economic development and is bad for business. A private organization, Transparency International, is working quietly in 52 countries to "rid society of corruption".*

By Raymond Bonner

From *The New York Times*

**B**ERLIN — Two years in Kenya as director of World Bank operations there convinced Peter Eigen of what he had begun to realize when he focused on Latin America: corruption was endemic, and, to put it mildly, seriously undermining development.

Since the World Bank was pouring billions of dollars into development, it seemed only natural that it should do something about it.

Mr. Eigen's colleagues in Africa had also seen enough. The response was "enthusiastic," he recalled, when at a World Bank meeting in the African nation of Swaziland in 1990, he proposed that the bank work with governments and multinational companies to develop a code of conduct.

But senior bank officials ordered Mr. Eigen to stop his anti-corruption efforts, saying they went beyond the bank's mandate, he said. He was not even to do it on his own time.

With that, Mr. Eigen decided to take early retirement — after 25 years at the bank — and in 1993, he started a nongovernmental organization to combat corruption.

Called Transparency International and headquartered in his native Berlin, the organization's goal, Mr. Eigen says, is to "rid society of corruption."

Moral opprobrium toward bribery is nothing new. It goes back some 4,000 years, with prohibitions found

on Babylonian tablets, John T. Noonan writes in "Bribes," an 839-page moral, historical and legal tome on the subject (Macmillan, 1984). A Federal judge on the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, Mr. Noonan is a member of Transparency International's advisory council.

Unlike Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which have discovered that their effectiveness in combating abuses comes through issuing reports criticizing governments, Transparency International practices "quiet diplomacy."

In an effort to win favor with governments and companies, whose policies and practices it hopes to change, the organization stresses that it does not investigate or even expose reports of bribery.

The organization acquired international recognition in a way that did not please all members of the board. In the spring of 1995, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that Transparency International had ranked countries by their corruption, based on surveys by risk analysts and businessmen.

This was just the type of information that the cautious Transparency board did not want to be made public. But some of the staff, convinced that a bit of sunshine is the best disinfectant, were delighted with the *Spiegel* article, for there was no longer a reason for Transparency International not to publish the list.

Intended to be an annual report, the latest Corruption Index, issued last month, places New Zealand and Denmark as the least corrupt countries, with Nigeria, Pakistan and Kenya dragging on the bottom.

Last year, Transparency's budget

was just over \$500,000, about a third of it coming from businesses, Mr. Eigen said, among them General Electric, Bechtel, IBM, Pfizer, Nestle and Westinghouse.

Taking business donations leaves the organization open to criticism that its independence is compromised, that its watchdog's teeth may not be so sharp, its officials acknowledged.

But that is not Mr. Eigen's major concern. "We worry more about taking government money," he said.

The United States Agency for International Development supports the group, as do several European governments.

A \$10,000 donation from Ecuador, in 1993, fueled the organization's critics when it turned out that the money had come from a secret account, managed by Ecuador's Vice President at the time, Alberto Dahik, who preached against corruption at home and was chairman of Transparency International's advisory council. Under investigation in Ecuador, Mr. Dahik has resigned from Transparency and is now in exile in Costa Rica.

After only three years, Transparency has chapters in 52 countries.

One of the most important is the American chapter, based in Washington. It is heavily influenced by corporate boards and the United States Government, which desires to level the playing field for American businesses. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, enacted in 1977, prohibits the payment of bribes to foreign officials; it is the only law of its kind in the industrialized world.

It is not always easy working with so many diverse chapters, Mr. Eigen said, diplomatically. "It is a miracle

that they have been brought under one umbrella, in particular a chapter as supportive and powerful as the American.”

But the group's hardest tasks are with European governments and businesses.

In Germany, it is against the law

for a company to bribe a German civil servant, but it is not against the law for a German company to bribe a government official in a foreign country. This is the law in most European countries.

What is more, in Germany, Greece,

Luxembourg and Belgium, foreign-paid bribes are fully tax deductible. In other countries — France, for instance, a bribe is a legal business expense, but only part of it can be deducted, a limitation that Mr. Eigen hardly finds laudable. ▣

## **TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL** (THE COALITION AGAINST CORRUPTION IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS)

### **OUR MISSION AND STRATEGY**

Transparency International is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation, to counter corruption both in international business transactions and, through our National Chapters, at national levels.

#### **Our mission is**

- To curb corruption through international and national coalitions encouraging governments to establish and implement effective laws, policies and anti-corruption programmes.

- To strengthen public support and understanding for anti-corruption programmes and enhance public transparency and accountability in international business transactions and in the administration of public procurement.

- To encourage all parties to international business transactions to operate at the highest levels of integrity, guided in particular by TI's Standards of Conduct.

#### **Our strategy is to do this by**

- Establishing coalitions of like-minded organisations and individuals to work with governments (wherever possible) to assist in developing and implementing national anti-corruption programmes.

- Initiating an information centre and conducting practically-oriented research into aspects of containing corruption; participating in public fora; and using publicity campaigns to broaden public awareness of the damage caused by corruption, the need to counter it, and the means to reduce it.

- Building National Chapters of TI that foster anti-corruption programmes in their own countries in accordance with TI's approaches and core values and to help secure support for TI's international programme of action.

We urge you to join us in our effort.  
Peter Eigen, Chairman of the Board

### **WHY A PROGRAMME AGAINST INTERNATIONAL CORRUPTION?**

Transparency International (TI) was launched in May, 1993 and is generating wide interest throughout the world among people concerned with the abuse of public power for private profit. In increasing numbers of countries, the media, non-governmental organisations and political leaders are all calling for governmental reforms to make politicians more accountable and the decision-making process more transparent.

SOURCE: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

TI's concern is a humanitarian one. Corruption is causing vast sums of money to be misallocated by public officials in dozens of countries. Funds, originally earmarked for new schools, hospitals and institutions to serve the most needy, are often channelled into projects of negligible social value by officials receiving kick-backs from commercial contractors.

In this process, elements in both the North and the South are implicated. But one thing is clear: if it were not for the eagerness of businessmen from the North and their readiness to flout the laws of the South in their thirst for export orders, the problem would be nowhere as great as it is today.

Behind these companies stand governments, who somewhat incongruously give development aid to promote standards of government while at the same time giving tax breaks to those of their companies who help destroy good standards of government by offering massive bribes to officials.

Corruption is also the enemy of progress. Corrupt leaders cling to power, opposing efforts to open government, curbing personal freedoms and abusing basic human rights.

Corruption crushes the potential benefits of free market forces. The honest business person goes broke, the rules of a healthy economic system become twisted, and companies addicted to paying bribes become rotten. In consequence, prospects for economic progress, so vital to social development, are ruined.

Equally important is enhancing international education on this subject. There are, for example, too many countries where corporations can pay bribes abroad and claim these as tax deductible expenses in their home countries. Laws that permit companies to behave in this way encourage bribery. They poison the environment of international business, make a mockery of public rhetoric by political leaders on behalf of ethical government and undermine international trade and investment agreements. TI aims to raise public sensitivity to such issues of national policy.

- TI's international priority is with large-scale corruption and the deficiencies of institutions and practices that permit it.

- TI's international actions focus specifically on corruption concerned with large-scale international transactions.

- TI brings an international dimension to campaigns.

This work parallels efforts within countries by national authorities, National Chapters and non-governmental organisations whose prime focus is large-scale domestic corruption. TI brings an international dimension to such national-based anti-corruption campaigns.

# THE LAND MINE DILEMMA

*There are about 110 million land mines scattered around the world, according to the International Red Cross. About 10,000 people, mostly civilians, are killed by land mines every year, with another 20,000, many children, maimed or injured. Land mine proliferation is proving a bitter legacy and one the civilized world must continue to deal with, albeit one step at a time.*

## From The Wall Street Journal

There are about 110 million land mines scattered around the world, according to the International Red Cross. About 10,000 people, mostly civilians, are killed by land mines every year, with another 20,000, many children, maimed or injured. Despite these grim statistics, much of the civilized world balked at altering the rules for the sale and use of land mines during a recent U.N. conference in Geneva.

Land mines are, next to nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, the most horrific weapon armies have in their arsenals. They are totally indiscriminate, incapable of telling a soldier on patrol from a child exploring the countryside and, more often than not, remain lethal and undetected long after the combatants have gone home. Given the politics and economics of land mines, even if the conferees in Geneva had achieved their highly enviable goal of a total world-wide ban on the use of land mines, it probably wouldn't have done much good.

What was agreed to in Geneva was a watered-down compromise calling for all antipersonnel land mines to be detectable (i.e. made at least partly of metal, instead of cheaper, undetectable synthetics) and have a limited life span. Signatories have nine years to switch to the new standards. Interestingly, among the MIAs (Missing In Action) in Geneva were the three most important countries that could limit the

devastation of land mines—the United States, Russia and China.

The U.S. military argues against a blanket ban because it relies heavily on land mines. With drastic manpower reductions, the U.S. and other Western powers are constantly looking for “force multipliers,” tactics or weapons that give them a battlefield advantage against numerically superior forces. Land mines do that nicely, they say, making it possible for rapid reaction forces entering a hostile country — such as Somalia, Liberia or Bosnia — to use land mines to secure perimeters against a numerically superior force until a large follow-on force arrives.

Land mines are also used in the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea, along international borders and around various military and government installations. The U.S. military points out that the majority of land mines used in missions abroad are self-destructing after anywhere from four hours to 15 days. In fact, all U.S. land mines procured since 1974 have a self-destruct feature.

Indeed, the U.S. and many of its allies aren't the problem. It's true that some supposedly civilized nations — Britain and Italy, to name two — export conventional mines to the Third World. But according to the U.S. military, China and Russia are responsible for 90% of the cheap, plastic mines littering the Third World and blowing arms and legs off innocents. And given the fast cash land mine sales provide, these two aren't likely to sign a broad ban on land mines.

There have been proposals that the U.S. and other Western nations lead the way, employing a blanket unilateral ban. The net result, the U.S. mili-

tary says, would be to deny the U.S. and its allies the use of a vital technology, while doing nothing to curb the proliferation of mines in the Third World. The evidence they cite is the Chemical Weapons Convention Treaty (CWC). While the U.S. and many of its allies have busied themselves destroying their stockpiles of chemical weapons in compliance with CWC, Third World proliferation of chemical and biological weapons is on the rise and now a global threat. One need look no further than the huge chemical and biological weapons plant Col. Gadhafi is building south of Tripoli.

International efforts such as the one in Geneva do have the important benefit of responding to public pressure and setting the moral high ground; but the hard truth is that enforcing a ban on land mines would be a tall order.

There may be more immediate goals worth pursuing. First, clear the most dangerous areas. Afghanistan with more than 40 million land mines, Cambodia with more than five million, and Mozambique and Bosnia, each with more than one million. The major obstacle is the \$30 billion price tag. In addition to de-mining such places, the U.S. and its allies can insist that mine-clearing be made a major part of any future U.N./NATO peace-keeping missions. These two efforts will help save the lives of some — not all-innocent civilians. Moreover, not unilaterally signing onto a total land mine ban will probably save the lives of some U.S. or NATO servicemen deployed to keep the peace somewhere. Land mine proliferation is proving a bitter legacy and one the civilized world must continue to deal with, albeit one step at a time. ■



## FACT SHEET: U.S. EFFORTS TO ADDRESS PROBLEM OF LANDMINES

(the following Fact Sheet was issued by the White House May 16, 1996)

The administration is committed to addressing the humanitarian crisis caused by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines (APL). It is estimated that every year more than 25,000 people are maimed or killed by these weapons. To this end, the administration has pursued a broad range of efforts to control the transfer and use of APL, as well as to protect civilians from those APL that have already been laid in the ground through mine awareness and mine clearance programs.

— Since 1992, the United States has observed an export moratorium on APL. The United States has urged other countries to adopt export moratoria as well. To date, more than 30 nations have joined us.

— In 1994, in his U.N. General Assembly address, President Clinton initiated the call for the eventual elimination of APL. Since then, the U.N. General Assembly has adopted annually by consensus a resolution supporting this goal.

— Also at the U.N. General Assembly, in 1994, the president proposed an international agreement to reduce the number and availability of APL. A first meeting on the program to restrict the production, stockpile and transfer of APL was held in June, 1995. Consultations on it continue.

— The United States pressed for tighter restrictions on APL use in the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). At the conclusion of the CCW

Review Conference on May 3, 1996, a number of important improvements to the CCW were adopted, including provisions that: all APL must be detectable, all non-self-destructing APL can only be used in marked and monitored areas, and self-destructing/self-deactivating APL must have a lifespan of no more than 120 days with a combined self-destruct/self-deactivate reliability rate of 99.9%. CCW parties also agreed that the new rules should be extended to internal armed conflicts.

— The United States contributes to demining programs around the world. In fiscal year 1996, the U.S. government will spend about \$32 million in cash and in-kind contributions to demining programs

in 14 countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Laos, Mozambique, Namibia, OAS/IADB regional program in Central America (Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua) and Rwanda.

— In Bosnia, the United States has led the effort to establish a Mine Action Center in Sarajevo, which coordinates mine information, education, and demining activities there. The United States provided the initial \$8.5 million for the Center.

— The Department of Defense is pursuing research and development of technology specifically designed for the needs of humanitarian demining operations. The FY97 request for this program is about \$7 million.

## U.S., SOUTH AFRICA SIGN ANTI-CRIME AGREEMENT

WASHINGTON — The United States and South Africa signed a declaration on mutual anti-crime prevention July 23 at the end of the current segment of the U.S.-South Africa Binational Commission meetings.

In the agreement, the two governments stressed on the necessity of mutual cooperation in combating international crime, including international terrorism.

They explained that such cooperation may include but need not be limited to the following:

— assignment of representatives of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria to coordinate intelligence, training, and possible joint operations in combating transnational drug trafficking;

— provision for training and support for drug demand reduction and preventive education outreach;

— establishment of an FBI Legal Attache office in Pretoria to liaise with host country law enforcement organizations in support of law enforcement activities including, but not limited to, the exchange of intelligence information and investigation of international terrorism, financial/computer crimes, kidnappings and other transnational crimes, as well as to facilitate the location, arrest, and extradition of international fugitives within the FBI's jurisdiction;

— development by South Africa of a police training program to enhance professional capabilities in fighting organized crime, financial crimes, and alien smuggling, which may include specialized courses offered by U.S. law enforcement training programs such as ICITAP (International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program);

— inclusion of South African participants in U.S.-administered courses for

professionals assigned to the fields of Customs and Immigration, narcotics interdiction, VIP protection, and financial crimes;

— promotion of exchange visits by teams of law enforcement officials ranging from working-level police to public defenders, prosecutors, and judges, up to officials at the ministerial level; and

— pursuit of other exchanges of information, training programs, and international cooperation as may be mutually desirable.

In conclusion, the United States and South Africa declared that they are convinced that their mutual cooperation in fighting the scourges of organized crime, drug trafficking, and international terrorism can result in a tangible benefit to their mutual societies, the surrounding regions, and the world.

# RADIO IS A AFRICAN' N<sup>o</sup>. 1 NEWS SOURCE

*Radio is probably the greatest source of information in rural Africans' lives. It reaches more people more frequently than any other method of communicating and exerts more influence on a more consistent basis. The Voice of America (VOA) now beams 82-1/2 hours a week of broadcasts to Africa in seven languages, reaching more than 20 million regular listeners.*

By Takehiko Nomura  
From *The Washington Times*

**W**hile Western countries are increasingly wired for receiving a flood of information, most in Africa are still out of the loop. The majority of the people still cannot afford a television or even get access to electricity.

On an immensely vast continent with unreliable transportation systems, more than 800 ethnic groups and 2,000 indigenous languages, Africans face enormous communication barriers. Although newspapers publish information in colonial languages such as English and French, many people can't read. That lack of understanding could widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

Under such circumstances, the recent explosion in the number of private radio stations has grabbed the attention of American officials.

The issue was discussed late last month at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on African affairs.

"A decade ago, there were virtually no nongovernmental radio stations broadcasting in sub-Saharan Africa," said Thomas N. Hull III, director of the Office of African Affairs at the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). "Now there are at least 137 in 27 countries."

Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Kansas Republican, who heads the

subcommittee, recalled her trip to Africa at the hearing: "I was struck by the pervasive power of radio in Africa. From democratizing Mali to troubled Rwanda, radio holds immense power and possibilities."

The number of radio stations in Africa has increased. But most are still in grips of governments, which have justified their control over the media as a means of national unity and development. Most people get nothing but their own government's views.

The USIA has 80 Foreign Service officers in sub-Saharan countries, which have been assisting the development of the independent radio stations as "essential" elements in African democratization, according to Mr. Hull.

"Independent radio cannot guarantee the survival of democracy," Mr. Hull said. "But without independent mass media, democracies do not flourish"

"Radio is probably the greatest source of information in rural Africans' lives," Carol A. Peasley, deputy assistant administrator of the Bureau for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), told the hearing.

"It reaches more people more frequently than any other method of communicating and exerts more influence on a more consistent basis. People listen to radio because it is inexpensive and timely," she said.

She emphasized the importance of the "diversity" of ways in which radio can be used: in education, agriculture, the environment, health and family

planning. The agency, she added, has been using radio as a development tool worldwide for more than three decades.

Most of those who question the credibility of state-controlled media in Africa have turned to overseas radio broadcasts such as the British Broadcasting Corp. and the Voice of America.

The VOA beams 82-1/2 hours a week of broadcasts to Africa in seven languages, reaching more than 20 million regular listeners, said VOA Director Geoffrey Cowan. It is "providing news and information that is essential to the continued growth of democracies and free-market societies, the implementation of human rights and to development.

"For many of our listeners, we are a vital information lifeline," Mr. Cowan told the panel.

The VOA and the USIA, however, face tough battles because of budget cuts.

"The budget for U.S.-government-funded international broadcasting, including the VOA, has been cut by 25 percent," Mr. Cowan said. The VOA has "been forced to make drastic cuts in our staff" — more than a 30 percent reduction to the current staff of 1,190.

"We have reduced the number of news bureaus and stringers and cut funds for travel," he said.

Budget cuts have caused a "rapid" erosion of the USIA's Africa programs, Mr. Hull said. "We haven't been able to sustain the same level of activity," which includes training for African journalists.

Continuing to train them is "beneficial" to both the





United States and African countries, he said, because democratic countries need independent journalists who themselves have a “professional sense of ethics.”

“We are very interested in seeing African countries succeed in the development of the democratic process,” he emphasized.

While cutting costs, the VOA has depended in part on other sources such as AID and the Carnegie Foundation for their financial resources.

During his extensive research on the VOA, however, Julius Barthson, a graduate student in the advanced school of mass communication at the University of Yaounde 11 in Cameroon, has seen that the more funding there is from external sources, the more programs reflect largely American interests.

“VOA doesn't have as many pro-

grams as it used to,” Mr. Barthson said. It needs more government funds “to be able to create more programs with which they can target at a variety of the audience.

“VOA has to create more independent programs based on what the audience needs to hear,” he added.

“It is certainly a wonderful idea if broadcasting studios, state-of-the-art equipment and training was given to local creators, producers and performers to create indigenous programming. That certainly would be the ideal way for the information society to develop,” said Shalini Venturelli, an assistant professor of international communication at the American University.

“But because this is capital-intensive, I doubt very much that example can be expanded to other countries,” Miss Venturelli said.

In order to target a bigger audience, the VOA needs programs in more indigenous languages, some experts said.

For example, pidgin English is widely spoken in Central and West Africa, but the VOA does not have a program in that language.

In Cameroon, where the VOA broadcasts in both English and French, the majority of the people don't understand the broadcast because they speak pidgin English.

“At the moment we don't have the money to do it. But if we had the money to start that service, we would like to,” Mr. Cowan said in an interview. “It is one of those services we have followed by adding.”

Mr. Cowan said the VOA is to introduce a new Central Africa Service in the local languages of Kirundi and Kinyarwanda with funding from AID.

“We hope to do it some time (in the) next month or two,” he said. “There are a lot of elements to do. You have to find qualified broadcasters, train them and also make sure that money is being secured. We are working on all of that right now.”

## FULBRIGHT PROGRAM CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

WASHINGTON — Fifty years ago on August 1, President Harry Truman signed legislation creating the Fulbright Educational Exchange Program. The legislation had been introduced by the junior Senator from Arkansas, J. William Fulbright, whose purpose it was to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and those of other nations.

Speaking about his friend and mentor J. William Fulbright, and the exchange program he conceived 50 years ago, President Bill Clinton said: “When William Fulbright proposed his exchange program, the world was divided and shattered by global war. We now live in a world linked economically and by information technology undreamed of then. Yet Senator Fulbright's recognition of the urgent need for the world's people to know each other and each others' cultures is as relevant today as it was then. His legacy, the Fulbright Program, remains a vibrant response to the diverse challenges of our changing world.”

Best known of the exchange activities of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the Fulbright Program has sponsored more than 200,000 people — over 70,000 Americans who have studied, taught or done research abroad and over 130,000 people from other countries who have done the same in the United States.

Oxford University don Robert McCallum said the Fulbright Program has been “responsible for the largest and most significant movement of scholars across the earth since the fall of Constantinople in 1453.”

The success of the program has been due in part to its binational nature. In addition, foreign government and private sector donations are leveraged by the dollars Congress appropriates.

“I have heard from country after country in this Fulbright anniversary year, of the enormous respect and affection the world has for Senator Fulbright and the program he created,” said USIA Director Joseph Duffey. “The program stands as America's greatest contribution to international understanding and world peace.”

Acknowledged as America's flagship educational exchange program, Fulbright now counts among its alumni many of the world's most distinguished leaders in nearly every professional field. Five recent heads of state came to the United States in their formative years on Fulbright grants. Seventeen former Fulbrighters are Nobel Prize winners. More than 60 U.S. university presidents are Fulbright Program alumni.

Fulbright alumni bring the benefits of their exchange experiences, over the balance of their lifetimes, into their offices, classrooms, and families each day,” said John P. Loiello, USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The Fulbright 50th anniversary is being celebrated throughout the United States and around the world in 1996. President and Mrs. Clinton hosted a dinner at the White House in June honoring the program.

The program, even better known abroad than in the United States, has been celebrated in many of the 140 other countries where it operates.

# SOUTH AFRICAN BEATS INJURY AND HISTORY TO WIN MARATHON

J e r e L o n g m a n

From *The New York Times*

**A**TLANTA — He reached the end after 26.2 miles and windmilled his arm as if winding up to throw a pitch instead of winding down from a marathon.

But Josia Thugwane could be forgiven for this bit of ostentatious celebration. He had just become the first black South African to win an Olympic gold medal. Five months ago, he was not certain that he could even run this race, much less win.

In March, Thugwane was carjacked outside his hometown of Bethal, South Africa. A shot was fired that grazed his chin and left a thick inch-long scar. He jumped from the car while it was moving and injured his back.

One moment, he was the South African marathon champion, a qualifier for the Summer Games. The next, he was lying on the ground wondering if his career had been stolen along with his car.

"I thought it may not be possible for me to come back and run again," Thugwane said.

But the coal mine that employs him as a security guard paid for his medical expenses, giving him free time to train and to rehabilitate his back. Sunday, work at the mine came to a standstill as miners interrupted their shifts to watch their hero on television. He did not disappoint them.

Thugwane used a series of surges on a humid morning to win the closest race in a century of Olympic marathons, taking the gold medal in

2 hours 12 minutes 36 seconds, a mere three seconds ahead of Lee Bong Ju of South Korea. The bronze went to Eric Wainaina of Kenya in 2:12.44, only eight seconds behind the winner.

As South Africa emerges from international isolation, the most visible signs of international achievement and national unity are President Nelson Mandela's government and the success of the country's sporting teams.

South Africa won the 1995 rugby world championship, the 1996 African nations soccer championship, and collected its first Olympic gold medal in 44 years when the swimmer Penny Heyns won the 100-meter breaststroke at these centennial Games.

Sunday, in a dramatic confirmation of racial equilibrium, the same country that was banned from the Summer Games from 1964 through 1988 because of the policies of apartheid produced a black Olympic champion.

"I'm grateful I have this opportunity," said the 25-year-old Thugwane. "It is an indication to others that if they work hard, all of us have equal opportunity, not like in the past."

In addition to seeing his wife and four daughters for the first time since June, Thugwane is now certain to be granted a meeting with Mandela and a lavish celebration when he returns home. He will also be awarded a cash prize of 50,000 rand, or about \$11,100, by the South African Olympic Committee, said Tony Longhurst, who is Thugwane's agent.

"For a country that has been through so much political turmoil, this is a huge hope for the future," Longhurst said. "We can have heroes who don't have to be black or white. They can be South Africans."



Mandela called Thugwane "South Africa's golden boy" who reinforced the country's pride and determination to overcome the disadvantages of apartheid. Among all the sports in sports-mad South Africa, perhaps none has been more progressive in terms of racial diversity than road racing, which has been integrated

since the 1970s.

Forcibly cut off from the rest of the sporting world during apartheid, South Africans developed a fevered interest in road races at every distance from the 10-kilometer (6.2-mile) run to ultra-marathons of 50 miles or more.

Since being restored to international competition again in 1992, South Africans have won important marathons in New York and Berlin. Sunday, Thugwane won the most important marathon of all, the Olympic marathon.

"Road racing reflects the color makeup of the nation more accurately than any other sport," said Mike Green, the editor of the South African edition of *Runner's World* magazine. "Sport has been such a unifying force the past two years. This is the cherry on top."

During apartheid, whites generally had the access to technical instruction, equipment and running tracks that were forbidden to blacks. In all of what was formerly considered black South Africa, there is only one all-weather running surface, in the township of Soweto. Blacks generally took to road racing, where shoes were the only equipment needed and bare feet would often suffice.

Still, blacks suffered legislated discrimination. In the past, black runners said they were sometimes stopped by police for running through white areas

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without carrying their identification papers. Some of the best black talent was forced to go elsewhere to find success. A native of South Africa, Mark Plaatjes, won the 1993 world championship, but by then he had become an American citizen.

Like most of South Africa's premier distance runners, Thugwane works at a mine, where he can get coaching, proper nutrition and prize money from winning races against runners from other mines.

He has so far avoided the trap of many South Africans who run two mine races each weekend, from 10 kilometers to a half-marathon. While this helps to feed a runner's family, too much racing can ultimately destroy the chance for a successful international career.

Thugwane was a soccer player at the Koorfontein coal mine, 60 miles east of Johannesburg in the drab town of Witbank, until he realized in 1988 that his legs would be more useful for distance running. A friend recruited him to run, and in his first race he earned 50 rand, or \$11.

His home is 26 miles from the mine, the distance of a marathon. Sometimes Thugwane drives home after work and training; when he is in training for an important race, he stays in a hostel at the mine on weekdays and travels to see his family on weekends.

By 1993, Thugwane, a member of the Ndebele tribe, had become South



Africa's national marathon champion. He repeated as champion last March, but two weeks later, he was carjacked near his hometown of Bethal. He stopped to pick up a man he knew, Thugwane said, when three other men climbed into his Toyota and demanded the keys and the car. He refused, he said, and "there was a bit of a scuffle." A shot was fired, and a bullet sliced Thugwane's chin.

"I jumped from the car when it was moving," he said.

By June, his wrenched back had healed sufficiently for Thugwane to accompany his teammates Xolile Yawa, Lawrence Peu and Gert Thys to Albuquerque, N.M., for altitude training. Yawa later withdrew from the Olympics because of a stress fracture.

Sunday, on a suffocatingly humid morning and on a wickedly hilly course that wound through Atlanta's downtown and suburban neighborhoods, Thugwane, Peu and Thys broke free from a pack of about 30 runners. By Mile 16, they were running at the front with Lee of South Korea.

"I had done the right training for the course," the diminutive Thugwane said. "I didn't have a problem with who I was running with. I knew that if anybody broke away, I'd stay with them."

As the course began to climb, Thugwane and Lee put on a surge of 4:49 for Mile 20 and opened a nine-second lead. They went through Mile 21 in 4:53 and were joined by

Wainaina, the Kenyan who had been training in Japan. The favorite, Martin Fiz of Spain, was now isolated in fourth place, out of the medal hunt.

Lee made a final, uphill move as the runners neared Olympic Stadium, but the strain showed on his face, and he could not drop the South African or the Kenyan. Just beyond 25 miles, Thugwane sprinted into the lead. He entered the stadium ahead by 20 meters, one lap from the gold medal.

No Olympic marathon had been this close. But Lee had no passing gear. Thugwane was safe, and as he neared the finish line, he windmilled his right arm in triumph.

"We can talk straight with our president now," said Peu, the South African who finished 27th, referring to Mandela and Thugwane. "We have been away two months. He will ask us what we have been doing. We will say, training for a gold medal. He will say, where is it? Here it is, we will say. We have evidence now. This is very big. This is history. He is right in the books now." □

#### ATLANTA OLYMPIC MEDAL WINNERS FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
NIGERIA	2	1	5	8
SOUTH AFRICA	2	1	1	4
ETHIOPIA	2	0	1	3
KENYA	1	4	2	7
BURUNDI	1	0	0	1
NAMIBIA	0	2	0	2
ZAMBIA	0	1	0	1
MOZAMBIQUE	0	0	1	1
UGANDA	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	8	9	11	28

# RHYTHMS AND ROCK FROM AFRICA

*This summer in New York city, the sound of music in a popular public park is from Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Zaire, Nigeria, Guinea and Martinique. While African rock is no longer a novelty in the United States, Americans are now knowledgeable enough to appreciate the beauty of African rhythms.*

By Jon Pareles

## From The New York Times

**N**EW YORK — To American listeners, African rock is no longer the revelation it was in the early 1980s. The impassioned voices, the mesh of drums and guitars, the incantatory melodies and the music's ever-changing proportions of local, pan-African and Western ingredients are all familiar to attentive listeners.

But as the music's general novelty has worn off, its pleasures have proved to be enduring, even if most American listeners can't understand the lyrics. On a Sunday in July at the Prospect Park Bandshell, Celebrate Brooklyn presented its fifth annual Africa Mondo Festival, a six-hour show of African and Caribbean groups, and five of the six bands on the bill made for a jubilant afternoon.

The most traditionalist music was by Adewale Ayuba from Nigeria and Coumba Sidibe from Mali. Ayuba's 12-member Bonsue Fuji Organization plays fuji music, which melds Yoruba and Islamic traditions. It uses only percussion and vocals, but its songs are fully orchestrated, from the booming bass tones of the talking drum to quick, high arpeggios from the three-headed baata drum.

Dancing across the stage with a ready smile, singing songs that often mentioned his own name, Ayuba could make his band sound like a chattering forest or like danceable thunder; the momentum eased off and then built

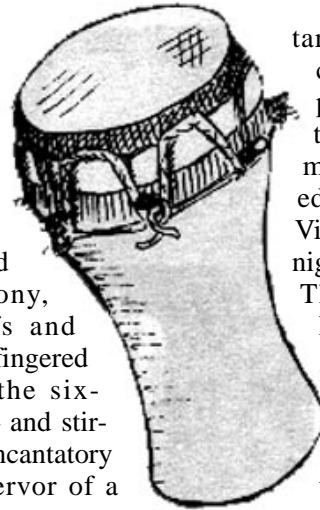
again and again.

Ms. Sidibe is from the Wassoulou area of southern Mali, which has a strong tradition of female singers. Her songs were simultaneously hypnotic — based on unchanging harmony, unswerving bass riffs and slowly evolving, quick-fingered patterns plucked on the six-stringed kamal ngoni — and stirring, as she sang long, incantatory lines with the gritty fervor of a gospel belter.

Other groups had more pan-African repertoires. Les Go de Koteba, whose three female vocalists come from Mali, Guinea and the band's home, the Ivory Coast, suggested stern Islamic music in one song, cheerful rumba-group harmony in the next; with synchronized high kicks and arm twirls, they danced like a more athletic version of the Supremes.

But their voices still had the untempered intonation of African tradition, and the guitarist, Sory Diabate, could plunk like a country-blues musician or play crisply syncopated chords while Boubacar Diabate on djembe (hand drum) supplied pinpoint bar-rages. The band's grooves were more forceful than anything on the group's album "Les Go de Koteba" (Melodie import).

Virunga Feet on Fire is a band from Kenya led by a Zairian singer, Samba Mapangala. It has held on to a gentler, older style of soukous and laced it with a touch of South African mbaqanga. Mapangala has a sweet, imploring high tenor voice, and his band glides through the buoyant rumba rhythms of soukous, with two impassive gui-



tarists playing endless daisy chains of gleaming, overlapping phrases; every so often, two saxophonists join in with more riffs, as if dancers needed any more encouragement. Virunga is to perform Tuesday night at the Anarchy Cafe, 27 Third Avenue at St. Marks Place, East Village.

The bill also included Malavoi, from Martinique, which seesawed smoothly between jazzy verses and three-chord choruses; four violins give the music a dainty surface, while four diverse singers made songs sultry, playful and ardent.

The festival's letdown was Majek Fashek, a reggae singer from Nigeria, who performed with a smaller band than usual, a quartet, and spent too much of the set in aimless guitar solos. As if he was playing at a suburban bar, he instructed the audience about what "irie" ("good") means. In Brooklyn, the crowd already knew. □

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